

Name: _____ Date: _____ Period: _____

Lin-Manuel Miranda, Writer and Composer



Every day has the potential to be the greatest day of your life.

What would you do if you knew you wouldn't fail at it? For Lin-Manuel Miranda this is not a question he asks. Instead, he says, "I try to let my decisions be guided not by what I think will succeed or fail, but what I'm going to learn from that process." Because of this mindset, Lin-Manuel has been successful in his life.

Lin-Manuel Miranda was born on January 16, 1980 in New York City to Puerto Rican immigrants. As a child, he and his sister, Luz, took piano lessons. The house was full of music. Although the family was not able to go to Broadway musicals very often, they did listen to live cast recordings. As Lin-Manuel grew older, he also developed a love for hip-hop music.

After graduating high school, Lin-Manuel went to Wesleyan University in Connecticut. He majored in theater studies. While he was still in college, Miranda began writing music and lyrics for his first musical, *In The Heights*. The musical premiered in 2008. It won four Tony Awards, including one for Best Musical. (Tony Awards are given yearly for excellence in Broadway Theater.)

While on vacation in 2008, Lin-Manuel Miranda began reading *Alexander Hamilton* by Ron Chernow. This inspired him to begin writing a new musical based on Alexander Hamilton's life. For this musical, he wanted to use rap and hip-hop music. When Miranda was invited to perform the first White House Evening of Poetry and Spoken Word, he shared a song from the musical he was writing. In 2015, the musical, *Hamilton*, premiered on Broadway. It was immediately a hit. In

2016 the musical was nominated for a record 16 Tony Awards. It ended up winning 11 awards. That same year, Lin-Manuel won the Pulitzer Prize for drama. This award recognizes excellence in writing.

In addition to writing musicals, Lin-Manuel Miranda has acted in television and in movies. He was Jack the lamplighter in the movie *Mary Poppins Returns*. He also wrote the music and lyrics to the song, "How Far I'll Go" for the movie *Moana*.

Lin-Manuel is married to Vanessa Nadal. They have two young sons, Sebastian and Francisco.

Lin-Manuel, along with his parents, sister, and wife, are involved in community activism. They support several different programs. They support arts education in New York City. They have also raised over \$45 million for relief and rebuilding of Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria destroyed the island in 2015. Most recently, the Miranda Family has raised money to help those who have been affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic.

In 2020, Lin-Manuel Miranda turned 40. With his belief that you can learn from both your mistakes and successes, one wonders what else he will do in his life. Alexander Hamilton says in the musical, *Hamilton*, "There's a million things I haven't done. Just you wait, just you wait." So for now, we will wait to see what he will do!

Name: _____ Date: _____ Period: _____

Lin-Manuel Miranda, Writer and Composer



Every day has the potential to be the greatest day of your life.

1. How do you know that Lin-Manuel Miranda cares about people he doesn't know?

2. What detail from the text supports the fact that Lin-Manuel is not afraid to make mistakes?

3. What effect did reading the book *Hamilton* by Ron Chernow have on Lin-Manuel Miranda's life?

4. The term *arts* refers to acting, writing, and creating art work. How do you know that the *arts* are important to Lin-Manuel Miranda?
